PLEASE DO NOT QUOTE OR CITE WITHOUT AUTHORS' PERMISSION

Be Careful What You Ask For: How Inquiry Strategy Influences Readiness Mode

Leslie E. Sekerka, Ph.D.
Associate Professor, Organizational Behavior
Director, Ethics in Action Research and Education Center
Menlo College
Atherton, CA – USA

Roxanne Zolin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
School of Management
Queensland University of Technology

J. Goosby Smith, Ph.D.
Associate Professor
Martin V. Smith School of Business & Economics
Cal. State U., Channel Islands
Camarillo, CA

Be Careful What You Ask For:
How Inquiry Strategy Influences Readiness Mode

Abstract

The importance of readiness for change is addressed in change management literature, yet it is still unclear how intervention questions posed at the start of the process influence attitude formation. Regardless of the type of change desired, preparation is essential in helping employees move forward. We wanted to know how different inquiry strategies impact emotions and attitudes towards change from the onset, which might prepare employees in varying ways. A field experiment was conducted where participants engaged in conversations, sharing their experiences using one of two different inquiry frames, strength- or deficit-based, with a focus on themselves or their organization. Transcripts were analyzed to assess employees' state of readiness, with specific interest directed toward the affective component of their reactions. We learned that different strategies foster distinct readiness modes, which can be used to help managers direct an appropriate starting point, given the type of organizational change desired.

Key words: Organizational change and development, change management, appreciative inquiry, positive organizational scholarship, readiness for change

Be Careful What You Ask For:
How Inquiry Strategy Influences Readiness Mode

The manager as practitioner continues to seek out alternative methods for organizational change and development. Sometimes the desire is to create a systemic or deeper level of change (Quinn, 2000). At other times, the intent is to make specific structural or incremental change. Regardless of the type or magnitude of organizational change, there is potential for a variety of emotional responses. Given that negative energy may be present among employees even before a change process begins, scholars have called for research that explores how negative experiences may be shaped to help employees turn them into positive ones (Clarke *et al*., 2007). We believe that a more thoughtfully informed approach to the change process is needed to manage negativity within the system.

In this paper we argue that attention must be directed to how the questions we ask can shape people's readiness—from the very start of a change intervention process. Viewing the nuances of inquiry as part of the change strategy is expected to help managers learn how to utilize both negative and positive experiences in support of organizational change. Huy (1999) underscores that emotions are central to the process of transformation and that we must look closer at the process components, highlighting the importance of employee receptivity as central to mobilization and learning.

Classic organizational change theory based upon Lewin's (1951) force field analysis model depicts change as an effort to unfreeze the current situation, move to a desired state, and then refreeze the system so that it sustains activity in the new state. Scholars and practitioners have continued to refine this process for over half a century with consistency in the depiction of how preparation toward movement is essential from the start (cf. Balogun and Hope-Haley,

2003). Recent research suggests that enabling mobilization means that individuals become ready to let go of the past, thus preparing themselves to transition to something new (Clarke *et al*., 2007). This is similar to Prochaska's work reading people for individual change, also described in stages (Prochaska *et al*., 1994; Prochaska *et al*., 1997). The first stage is precontemplation, where the need for change is not yet acknowledged. This is followed by the contemplative stage as individuals consider, but do not yet initiate, change. Entering the initial stages of changes and progression forward is governed by decisional balance, as one considers the anticipated risks of change versus the potential benefits of change (Cunningham *et al*., 2002). In this research we are primarily concerned with how emotions are generated in the first stage of the change process, to better understand how they may be intertwined with attitudes that prepare employees for their initial acceptance and mobilization.

Practitioners of organizational change typically use deficit-based and/or strength-based methods of inquiry when they begin an intervention. The deficit-based approach represents a more traditional method for developing organizations and creating change within them (French *et al*., 2000). Strength-based approaches are designed to identify organizational assets as levers for transformation (Bunker and Alban, 1987; Cooperrider *et al*., 2003; Weisbord, 1987). Each of these inquiry methods stem from a theoretical framework, which we refer to as *frame*.

Deficit-based approaches are framed by the assumption that problems cannot be solved and deficits cannot be addressed unless they are first identified. Consequently, practitioners using this approach begin the process by inquiring about existing workplace dysfunction, with the goal to solve problems. Strength-based approaches are framed by the assumption that where we direct our attention is what we affirm and become. The process examines what gives life to the organization and then directs those engaged to identify what contributes to systemic strengths. In

both approaches, the operating frame shapes the questions posed in the organizational intervention (Cooperrider and Sekerka, 2003).

In addition to choosing a primary method of inquiry (i.e., deficit- or strength-based), the practitioner also chooses to tap into different referential points. In other words, when planning an inquiry (regardless of the method or frame selected), the facilitator drives the initial focus by targeting the individual or the organization. While this may not be a conscious decision, the *focus* can be directed toward understanding employees' perceptions of themselves (i.e., focus on the "self"); or alternately, toward understanding employees' perceptions of their organization (i.e., focus on the "organization").

To more thoroughly affect the type of change that management desires, we must understand how the initial questions used in an intervention shape employees' reactions. One way of doing this is to explore how the initial choices made in the approach (frame and focus) combine to influence both feelings and salient thoughts. Existing research has moved to explicate the differences between the deficit- and strength-based approaches to organizational change (Bushe and Kassam, 2005). However, rarely are the questions scrutinized to better understand how they guide and impact the path of change (Sekerka *et al*., 2006). In describing the intricacies of reflexivity, Harley, Hardy and Alvesson (2004) explain how researchers hold a position of power in that they help to create the truth, rather than to reveal it. The questions posed in an intervention can shape the construction of a certain version of the world as experienced by those engaged in the process. Therefore, we must consider the nature of the inquiry and consider self and the language from that self as tools in the process of initiating change. This underscores why it is essential that managers have a better understanding of how the questions they ask prepare people for how they view the world if they want to responsibly and thoughtfully improve their

ability to mobilize employees.

Researchers have found that organizational change methods are most effective when employees are prepared (Armenakis *et al*., 1993; Armenakis *et al*., 1999; Chawla and Kelloway, 2004; Jones *et al*., 2005; Wanberg and Banas, 2000). This preparedness, also referred to as readiness for change, relates to employees' beliefs, attitudes, and intentions (Armenakis *et al*., 1993). Our interest is in how the inquiry strategy used at the start of the process affects employees' emotions, which can influence attitude formation. If managers have a better understanding of the implications of various inquiry strategies (i.e., frame and focus), they may be more effective in establishing readiness. To investigate this matter, we asked: How might the initial inquiry strategies used in organizational change intervention impact employees' emotions (affective) and attitudes (cognitive) to potentially influence employees' readiness for change?

To investigate this concern we used qualitative methods to empirically examine dyadic interviews held at the start of an organizational change effort. Rather than measuring readiness for change using an existing scale, we chose to explore the reactions articulated by employees within four conditions formed by crossing the inquiry frame (deficit- or strength-based) with inquiry focus (self or organization) to understand the phenomenon qualitatively. Our study contributes to change management research in two ways. First, we add value to the existing understanding of organizational change and development techniques by exploring the interaction of inquiry approach frame and inquiry focus. Second, by examining both the affective and cognitive aspects of readiness for change, we add depth to this construct, which presently has a more rational, cognitive orientation.

We proceed with a review of the literature on readiness for change (as it relates to inquiry strategy), followed by the theory that underlies inquiry strategy formation. The Methods section

describes the study design, sample, data collection, and data analysis. In the Results section we report our findings, which include themes from interview transcripts and significant differences in theme frequency by inquiry strategy as employees ready themselves for change. In the Discussion section we present several inductively-generated propositions and propose four distinct readiness modes that emerged from the data. We conclude the paper with implications for managers.

THEORY

This section contains the theories and constructs that guided our inductive inquiry. Since the purpose of this study is to better understand readiness for change, we address this first. Next, we present a description of inquiry frame, which varies between being deficit- or strength-based. This is followed by a description of inquiry focus with attention to two general foci, on the individual and on the organization. We end this section by presenting the four inquiry strategies and recapping why we expect them to impact employees' emotions and attitudes regarding the impending organizational change.

Readiness for Change

Before commencing the organizational change intervention, facilitators can benefit from recalling an important antecedent to a successful effort—readiness for change. Although defined and conceptualized in a number of different ways, few remember to take change readiness into account (Bernerth, 2004). Beyond a well-planned effort introduced into an organization that supports the process, how employees prepare for change is a critical component for a more focused consideration. We believe that successful preparation involves a combination of affective and cognitive processes, which predispose employees to support, rather than to resist

change and/or the process itself.

Readiness for change has typically been assessed through questionnaires, interviews, and observation methods (Armenakis *et al*., 1976; Fox *et al*., 1988; Pond *et al*., 1984). The latest research presents the development of a variety of scales to measure the construct directly (Jones *et al*., 2005; Holt *et al*., 2007). Holt and his colleagues noted that these measures examine change readiness from several dimensions, including change process, change content, change context, and individual attributes. While attitudes are valued, researchers appear to consider readiness for change as largely a cognitive process. For example, the construct itself is purported to be "the cognitive precursor to the behaviors of either resistance to, or support for, a change effort" (Armenakis *et al*., 1993: 681). While managers' emotions in the process of organizational change have been examined (Mossholder *et al*., 2000), we offer a broader view by adding the relevance of emotions in attitude formation among employees. In this way, we directly address the affective component of readiness for change within the organization.

The Affective Component

In addition to cognitive factors that impact employees' readiness for change, there are also affective factors (George and Jones, 2001; Roberto & Levesque, 2005). Some may claim that the types of questions we ask lead to obvious reactions. In fact, most readers would agree that people often react emotionally to change. Moreover, when you ask someone to reflect on a positive situation it reaffirms a favorable perspective, and when they examine something that does not work, it reaffirms a negative one. But a closer look at the literature on emotions underscores their relevance and the subtle nuances that reside below these obvious responses. Indeed, understanding how cognitions and emotions are intertwined is essential, if we are to better understand how the questions posed in an intervention can promote or curtail a useful

starting point for transformational or incremental change.

By emotion we refer to the mental state of readiness that arises from cognitive appraisals of events or thoughts; has a phenomenological tone; is accompanied by physiological processes; is often expressed physically (e.g., in gestures, posture, facial features); and may result in specific actions to affirm or cope with the emotion, depending on its nature and meaning for the person having it (Bagozzi *et al*., 1999: 184-5). Rooted in Lazarus's (1991) research, this definition reflects how cognitive appraisals are the basis for emotional response elicitation, with one's initial evaluation typically processed in terms of personal relevance (i.e. individual or organizational identity) and well-being, and framed in positive or negative terms (Weiss and Cropanzano, 1996).

A key purpose of our emotional reactions is to help us coordinate and manage responses to events and, in so doing, help us to shift from ongoing to new activities or to maintain desired states or current activities. Bagozzi and his colleagues (1999) explain how the self-regulation of goals is believed to be the main function of emotions. Each goal and plan has a monitoring mechanism that evaluates events relevant to it. When a substantial change in the probability of achieving an important goal or subgoal occurs, the monitoring mechanism broadcasts to the whole cognitive system a signal. This cue sets into readiness the person's response to change. People experience these signals and the states of readiness they induce as emotions (Oatley, 1992).

As judgments are formed about a target situation, the questions we ask people can influence what mental representations come to mind. Accordingly, both attitudes and emotions are based on the subset of information that is most accessible (Higgins, 1996). Therefore, questions trigger relevant emotions associated with a recalled experience or event. Both

theoretical and empirical research demonstrates how inquiry priming can impact individuals' emotions. For example, Strack *et al*. (1985) asked respondents to report either three recent positive or three negative life events. Those who had to recall positive events reported higher happiness and life satisfaction than those who recalled negative events.

When examining the influence of engagement in an organizational change process, Sekerka and her colleagues (2006) found that the highest positive affect occurred in groups using Appreciative Inquiry and the highest negative affect in groups using a Diagnostic approach. This was attributable, in part, to the former approach making a positive view of self salient (as efficacious and capable), while at the same time reducing the focus on negative aspects of the self. Because more positive views of self are aligned with favorable changes in positive emotion, strength-based inquiry can reduce the incident of negative affect. Studies have also shown how organizational change is mediated by stimulus-response, whereby negative appraisal is associated with reduced control and increased escape coping, which are positively related to positive and negative emotions (respectively) (Fugate *et al*., 2008). The persistence of negative emotion was underscored in a study by Bryant and Wolfram Cox (2006), when they found people who were engaged in a large-scale change described the experience as difficult. In fact, even those in the neutral condition described their sense of loss, both in terms of decision-making power and how they viewed their role in the organization. As managers know all too well, even without a change process underway, employees typically report a greater variety of negative emotions then positive ones (Dasborough, 2006).

Such negativity can be explained by research examining positivity ratios. One study found that a 5:1 ratio (positive to negative) is associated with effective team performance (whereas low positivity ratios [>1:1] are associated with poor performance) (Fredrickson and

Losada, 2005; Losada, 1999). A study by Keyes (2002) showed that a ratio of about 3:1 ratio (positive to negative) led to high levels of functioning and well-being. The irony is that while most people tend to be positive, there is a strong negativity bias that considers bad as stronger than good. For example, the effects of the negative events on workers' moods are five times stronger than are positive events (Miner *et al*., 2005).

Given the recent attention on Positive Psychology, Positive Organizational Scholarship, and Positive Organizational Behavior, many scholars have turned their attentions away from the study of resistance to change, directing more attention to how positivity impacts organizational change (cf. Avey *et al*., 2008). Avey and his colleagues found that psychological capital (a core factor consisting of hope, efficacy, optimism, and resilience) was related to people's experiencing positive emotions, which in turn was related to their attitudes (engagement or cynicism) and behaviors (organizational citizenship or deviance) relevant to the process of change. Bartunek and her colleagues found that employees' interpretation of the change initiative and their emotions created a substantial "affective undertone" stimulating emotional contagion that was described as influential in shaping the meaning of the change within work units (Bartunek *et al*., 2006).

In addition, scholars have called for the need to recognize how emotion can impact the success or failure of a change effort, emphasizing that managers must recognize the way organizational practices, processes, and designs affect the emotional work involved (Mayer and Smith, 2007). We argue that the questions posed at the onset of the intervention petitions emotionally influenced reactions, thus impacting employees' positions. Emotions can be catalysts either to propel people into action or to block their movement forward. As stated by Elfenbein (2008), "organizational change evokes emotions, so too do emotions evoke

organizational change" (p. 334). Because emotions affect people's attitudes, and the questions we ask can influence their initial appraisal, explicit attention must be given to the emotional side of the readiness story. This does not imply an inherent goodness or badness of any particular emotion. However, it highlights why it is essential for managers to consider the affective component of how people prepare for change.

Prior research suggests that other factors influence people's starting point for change (Armenakis and Harris, 2002). We know that it is important to examine the credibility of those managing the organization and leading the change, the social dynamics within the organization, the practitioner's competencies (e.g., persuasive communication), and how external information is managed. Armenakis and his colleagues also state that the change message itself may have an affect on employees' readiness. In fact, some scholars use components of the change message (e.g., discrepancy, appropriateness, self-efficacy, principal support, and personal valence) as a measure of readiness for change (Bernerth, 2004; Armenakis, 2002). As suggested by Madsen (2003), we argue that emotions influence the formation of attitudes at the start of an intervention, which can influence the path of organizational change. Managers need to realize how their inquiry strategy influences attitude formation so they can be better equipped to prepare employees for a successful movement toward transformation.

Inquiry Strategy: The Frame

Practitioners employ various interpretive schemas (Markus and Kunda, 1986), mental models (Senge, 1990), and theories in use (Argyris and Schon, 1978) as they formulate their strategies for effecting organizational change and development. We use the term *frame* to identify these operating assumptions that are employed by manager practitioners as they commence an intervention effort. Specifically, we are concerned here with two frames: the

deficit-based inquiry frame and the strength-based inquiry frame. We realize that facilitators are likely to combine these two core frames, since inquiry into the positive as well as the negative provides a more complete process for transformation than simply focusing exclusively on what works or what does not (Golembiewski, 1998). However, we dichotomize the two frames because our research goal is to understand the unique influences of each frame and its associated focus.

Deficit-based inquiry frame. Traditionally, the majority of organizational change and development techniques derives from diagnostics (Lippit, 1961). Here, the goal is the identification of organizational problems. By analyzing symptoms to formulate solutions and make changes, practitioners employ this frame with the goal of restoring order and function to the organization. Traditional methods progress linearly and are generally deficit-based because the managers typically work to locate symptoms and determine the causality of what is perceived broken, at risk, or in need of improvement (Barrett and Peterson, 2000). Using organizational flaws as levers for enhancement, repair, or transformation, this process is inherently a fault-finding venture.

When this frame is utilized, managers encourage employees to address the present negative aspects of their organizational realities. Examining the organization from this vantage point can motivate people to make immediate repairs. Toward this end, deficit-based approaches have been shown to increase employee collaboration as employees move to resolve urgent matters (Sekerka *et al*., 2006). This approach addresses problems with the existing system, thus producing outcomes that are likely in sync with the current management strategy. This can make implementation easier and perhaps more sustainable. The deficit-based inquiry frame can affect employees' attitudes and feelings, potentially influencing their readiness for change.

Strength-based inquiry frame. Instead of determining what is wrong with the organization or its employees, practitioners can choose to inquire about what gives life to the organization and use these strengths as a platform to instigate organizational change. Techniques such as Appreciative Inquiry (AI) are distinct from the pathology model implicit within the deficit approach (Porras and Silvers, 1991). AI is based upon the premise that change does not need to be based on the examination of problems, faults, or deficits. As described by Bushe (2007), the resulting benefits of a strength-based approaches like AI are not derived from being overly positive, but stem from the generativity produced from the process. He asserts that strength-based initiatives target what deeply touches people, which helps get them engaged and energized, and brings them together in a safe and affirming space where development transpires through relational trust and collaborative discovery.

Assuming that all inquiry is a form of intervention (Reason and Bradbury, 2001), the AI process is also grounded in social constructionism (Gergen, 1997). Those employing AI assume that employees construct reality based on where their attention is drawn to, what they reflect upon, and what is collectively discussed (Mohr *et al*., 2000). An analysis of AI intervention case studies shows how strength-based frames can help people change the way they think (Bushe and Kassam, 2005) and how transformation can be initiated effectively through the use of strength-based inquiry methods (Cooperrider *et al*., 2003; Ludema *et al*., 2004). Use of this frame enables facilitators to leverage what is valued by organizational members to instigate movement. Again, the strength-based inquiry frame can affect employees' attitudes and feelings, potentially influencing their readiness for change.

In summary, the two inquiry frames promote examination of the organization through the process of probing either deficits or strengths. Further consideration of the inquiry strategy

suggests that practitioners often direct employees to focus either on themselves or on their organizations. Next, we address the foci embedded within the questions that practitioners ask at the start of the intervention. We then explain how this relates to the frame and to overall inquiry strategy.

Inquiry Strategy: Inquiry Focus

When applying an inquiry frame (deficit- or strength-based), employees are also directed to reflect and focus on themselves or on their organization. This guided reflection guides employees' thoughts and feelings about their personal and organizational identities. In this section, we show how this may influence employees' readiness for change.

Active participation is an essential element toward establishing readiness for change (Armenakis *et al*., 1993). When people share their experiences, they bring perceptions of the past into the present, thus altering the present moment. The process of reflective introspection at the start of an intervention sets several processes into motion. As employees engage in the intervention, they reflect, illuminate, review, and potentially question their internal and external realities (Winnicott, 1965). These processes combine to impact employees' thoughts, feelings, and overall state of mind regarding, among other aspects, their readiness for change.

Focus on the Self. When employees focus inward, this prompts cognitive and affective processes pertaining to the self, thus affecting their behavior (Cooley, 1902; Mead, 1934). Furthermore, during introspection individuals move to confirm or change how they see themselves (Markus, 1977). An individual's stored representations of self-knowledge (self schemas) influence their future personal outcomes (Cross and Markus, 1994) by facilitating continual encoding, evaluation, and retrieval of new relevant information (Bargh, 1982; Markus *et al*., 1982; Nasby, 1985). Consequently, focusing on the self (e.g., "think of a time when *you*

experienced…") will prompt individuals to tap, think about, and examine self-schemas that relate to their personal identity.

Focus on the Organization. When employees focus externally on the organization they activate other processes. When the employee's self-concept is consistent with his or her perceptions of the organization's identity, organizational identification occurs (Dutton *et al*., 1994). This sense of social (Tajfel and Turner, 1985) or organizational connection can generate feelings of belongingness (Lee, 2004). Thus, starting an intervention by stimulating employees to focus upon the organization (versus themselves) may activate their organizational identities, which "intertwine" the employees with the common fate of the organization (Lee, 2004: 626).

In summary, inquiry focus can urge employees to make either their individual or their organizational identity more salient at the start of the intervention. Given the different identification processes discussed above, the use of different inquiry foci may promulgate different thoughts and feelings as people prepare for change.

Inquiry Strategy and Readiness for Change

As we looked at the two frames and considered the different identification processes spurred by the self and organizational foci, we wondered how their interaction would create distinctively different introductions to a change intervention. Thus we created four conditions by crossing these two dimensions. We call these conditions inquiry strategies.

Action research teaches us that when practitioners ask questions in organizations they are intervening (Reason and Bradbury, 2001). Given this assumption, the subtle features of every question are an influential tool of change, and therefore must be closely examined. We claim that key aspects of the questions are the operating theoretical frames they represent (strength- or deficit-based) and the topics upon which employees are asked to focus (themselves or the

organization). Missing from the present literature is an empirical examination of how inquiry strategy (frame and focus) impacts readiness for change. In the next section, we present the research methods used to address this concern.

METHODS

The present study took place during the first stages of a larger research project conducted at a U.S. government medical facility. Four conditions were formed by crossing the two inquiry frames (deficit- or strength-based) with the two inquiry foci (self or organization). The resulting conditions were strength-frame/self-focus (SS), strength-frame/organizational-focus (SO), deficit-frame/self-focus (DS), and deficit-frame/organizational-focus (DO),

Employees who volunteered to participate were randomly assigned to face-to-face dyads, which were randomly assigned to one of the four conditions. The inquiry strategy varied according to their assigned condition (see Appendix A for interview protocol). After reflecting on their assigned inquiry question, the participants shared their reactions with their partners. These recorded conversations were 40 minutes long and each participant had equal airtime for sharing. The facilitator used a script to ensure consistency across the conditions. Of the 1700 individuals employed at this medical facility, 224 engaged in this study. A broader description of the sample and study methods is presented in Appendix B. We inductively analyzed the conversations using thematic analysis to determine how the inquiry strategy influenced participants' reactions, reflecting their readiness for change. We used the quantitative analyses for inferential insights, to better understand which themes were significant within and between the four conditions. Next, we present our findings.

RESULTS

In this section we report key themes by condition. Exemplar quotes representing each theme appear in Table I (below). Descriptive statistics and the results from multivariate analyses are reported in Appendix B. Table II shows the frequency of themes by condition and the ANOVA reflected that there were significant differences of their representation between the conditions. The Scheffe analyses (Table III) highlights significant pairwise differences, which helped us to distinguish which themes were significant within each condition.

.

Table 1. Themes and Examples*

Theme	Example Quote
1. Excitement	It was an exciting feeling.
2. Joy	I felt happy. I felt a sense of self-satisfaction, and that's a good feeling. I think that was also one of the reasons I was able to get the job done so well.
3. Appreciation and gratitude	I feel like I've certainly been blessed.
4. Values helping	And in a setting like this, you know, you need to have a love for people and a desire to help people.
5. Feels valued	I felt like I worked hard, you know, over the years, but I also felt that I was recognized for it.
6. Inclusion of voice	They actually listened to me. And I couldn't believe it. I mean here I am and they're going to listen to me.
7. Freedom to make decisions	I do my work without little or no supervision. I do that well.
8. Conscientiousness	Another thing that helped me to work that I tried to become more effective. I tried to be part of that group. I tried to go all the way up to my standards, and then I start getting more involved within the organization like trying to get on the TQ Aims and all that stuff.
9. Empathy for others	And the patients, you know, you get used to them, and they more like my family 'cause my husband passed, and so I don't have no small kids. It's just coming to work, and you know, to be around. If you like working with peoples, you know, you can do this.
10. Organizational learning	(The organization) offers opportunities, you know, for us to take continuing ED courses so that we can, you know, keep up with the most current information and techniques, and they offer to, you know, reimburse up to a certain amount so that we can go ahead and learn new things and all that. I like the interest, I mean, that they have in trying to get us to get our education. I like that part, too, yeah. It's like making the system work for you.
11. Compliments organization	You can identify with each other as opposed to another organization. You know you got all walks of life at other organizations so they don't have a common thread. So I think that the organization, I mean that's veterans' organization, they have that one thing in common, and it makes it different from other organizations.
12. Effective organizational communications	Just general support and people willing to, you know, openly communicate with each other the issues going on regarding patients or otherwise; We all got along well and helped each other and communicated very well with each other.

Table 1. Themes and Examples (continued)

13. Coworkers are cohesive	It's a lot of caring and love over there, you know, as far as the nurses taking care of them, the guys, you know, having camaraderie with even the housekeepers, you know. It's like a family over there.
14. Coworkers part of team	We worked together because it was a common cause.
15. Coworkers are competent	This organization has some very good people here. They're very talented and mostly they know their job well.
16. Coworkers work hard	They work hard (coworkers). They work real hard.
17. Effective teamwork	(The team)…we all worked together well.
18. Frustration	I couldn't get in this organization, and it was kind of frustrating.
19. Anger	I got so angry, first he was undermining me…so I got rebellious, you know. And I kind of took it out on everybody else.
20. Resentment	They was saying that I was a troublemaker. All kinds of lies were being told.
21. Controlled by others	This supervisor…he used to contradict everything I do. I mean he used to every time I make a decision to do something, it wasn't right for him. And it was like not giving me no leeway, you know.
22. Criticizes organizational communications	It's…lack of communication within our service.
23. Criticizes management	I see them (management) stab me jump in the back, you know, all the time.
24. Considers leaving job	I was thinking about quitting or going to another job.
25. Solidarity	Employee A: Rumors go through. Employee B: Right, its rumors for the whole thing. But you know that's what this organization revolves around is conversation so when the rumors get out… Employee A: …it's like on Peyton Place. Employee B: Right. And everybody hearing it; ain't no telling, you know what I'm saying? He might be trying to get a job with somebody else and that rumor done jumped out on it. Employee A: And plus it can, like, get back to somebody who you don't might not want to hear that, and it's a lie.

Table 1. Themes and Examples (continued)

25. Solidarity (continued)	Employee B: It's a lie. Employee A: And then like that person might, she might believe it, man. Employee B: You see what I'm saying?...It makes my job hard.
26. Generates ideas	I kind of got my own ideas. I got the authority to make up my own ideas and questions and forms and database. And once I got that authority that helped out a lot.
27. Feels undervalued	They would get all these big bucks, so I felt, you know, like I was being abused a little bit…I took that for about six months. They just looked at you like you ain't shit and all that, right.
28. No inclusion of voice	There was a clique of employees that very much left me with kind of a left-out, isolated feeling.
29. Criticizes organization	What causes problems is…they don't supply us with enough equipment as far as which is to do with the job to help patients get around.
30. Low morale	A lot of low points about this place, man. It's going to the pits, to the dogs.
31. Coworkers are lazy	The young ones don't want to do nothing…lazy as hell.
32. Lack of teamwork	They seem like they sit back and let you…fall in it yourself…And don't care to look out for nobody, you know, keep everything you know, keep us as a team.
33. Worry	(I had) concern for the veterans or the employees that I was assisting.

*Only themes with significant differences across conditions as reported in Table II, are described.

Table II. Descriptive Statistics and ANOVA F (N=98)

Theme	Strength Self Mean	Strength Organization Mean	Deficit Self Mean	Deficit Organization Mean	ANOVA F
Excitement	**0.48**	0.12	0.08	0.00	5.42**
Joy	**3.22**	1.85	1.04	0.21	11.56***
Appreciation/gratitude	**0.52**	0.23	0.12	0.08	2.82*
Values helping	**1.61**	0.73	0.32	0.12	7.44***
Feels valued	**1.35**	0.50	0.04	0.00	13.00***
Inclusion of voice	**0.30**	0.04	0.00	0.00	6.07***
Freedom to make decisions	**0.57**	0.19	0.04	0.00	7.84***
Conscientiousness	**3.96**	0.65	0.76	0.42	25.54***
Empathy for others	**1.52**	1.15	0.24	0.92	4.07**
Organizational learning	0.78	**2.12**	0.12	0.00	17.70***
Compliments organization	0.17	**6.38**	0.00	0.58	48.29***
Effective organizational communication	0.00	**0.15**	0.00	0.00	4.19**
Coworkers cohesive	0.30	**0.65**	0.12	0.08	5.97***
Coworkers as team	0.22	**0.31**	0.04	0.00	3.45*
Coworkers are competent	0.04	**0.27**	0.00	0.00	6.58***
Coworkers work hard	0.04	**0.35**	0.04	0.04	3.76*
Effective teamwork	0.30	**0.69**	0.04	0.00	9.55***
Frustration	0.04	0.12	**2.32**	0.38	24.60***
Anger	0.04	0.00	**1.12**	0.50	10.30***
Resentment	0.00	0.04	**0.28**	0.17	3.31*
Controlled by others	0.17	0.19	**1.40**	0.79	9.26***
Criticizes organizational communication	0.00	0.12	**0.56**	0.42	3.04*
Criticizes management	0.70	0.50	**2.72**	2.08	11.74***
Considers leaving job	0.17	0.00	**0.69**	0.29	5.77***
Solidarity	0.43	0.54	**2.28**	0.42	8.99***
Generates ideas	0.00	0.00	0.16	**0.33**	2.16+
Feels undervalued	0.04	0.19	1.04	**1.21**	11.26***

No inclusion of voice	0.00	0.00	0.16	**0.25**	2.96*
Criticizes organization	0.57	1.73	4.72	**7.25**	30.93***
Low morale	0.04	0.04	0.16	**0.50**	6.19***
Coworkers are lazy	0.35	0.27	1.96	**2.42**	8.85***
Lack of teamwork	0.00	0.08	0.24	**0.42**	2.39+
Worry	0.00	0.00	0.12	**0.16**	2.70+

Note: Bold indicates highest mean observations; only themes with significant differences across conditions are reported; *** p <.001, ** p <.01, p <.05, + p < .10.

Table III. ANOVA with Scheffe Analysis (N=98)

Theme	SS-SO	SS-DS	SS-DO	SO-DS	SO-DO	DS-DO
Excitement	-0.368	**-0.40***	**-0.40****	-0.04	-0.12	-0.08
Joy	-1.37+	**-2.18*****	**-3.01*****	-0.81	**-1.64***	-0.83
Appreciation/Gratitude	-0.29	**-0.40**	-0.44	-0.11	-0.15	-0.04
Values helping	-0.88+	**-1.29****	**-1.48*****	-0.41	-0.61	-0.20
Feels valued	**-0.85****	**-1.31*****	**-1.35*****	-0.46	-0.50	-0.04
Inclusion of voice	**-0.27***	**-0.30****	**-0.30****	-0.04	-0.04	0.00
Freedom to make decisions	**-0.37***	**-0.53*****	**-0.57*****	-0.15	-0.19	-0.04
Conscientiousness	**-3.30*****	**-3.20*****	**-3.54*****	0.11	-0.24	-0.34
Empathy for others	-0.37	**-1.28*****	-0.61	-0.91	-0.24	0.68
Organizational learning	**1.33****	-0.66	-0.78	**-2.00*****	**-2.12*****	-0.12
Compliments organization	**6.21*****	-0.17	0.41	**-6.38*****	**-5.80*****	0.58
Effective organizational communication	0.15+	0.00	0.00	**-0.15***	**-0.15***	0.00
Coworkers are cohesive	0.35	-0.18	-0.22	**-0.53*****	**-0.57*****	-0.04
Coworkers are a team	0.09	-0.18	-0.22	-0.27	-0.31+	0.04
Coworkers are competent	**0.23***	-0.04	-0.04	**-0.27****	**-0.27****	0.00
Coworkers work hard	0.30+	0.00	0.00	-0.31+	-0.30+	0.00
Effective teamwork	0.39+	-0.26	-0.30	**-0.65*****	**-0.69*****	-0.04
Frustration	0.07	**2.28*****	0.33	**2.20*****	0.26	**-1.94*****
Anger	-0.04	**1.08*****	0.46	**1.12*****	0.50	-0.62+
Resentment	0.04	0.28+	0.17	0.24	0.13	-0.11
Controlled by others	0.02	**1.23*****	0.62	**1.21*****	0.60	-0.61
Criticizes organizational communication	0.12	0.56+	0.42	0.44	0.30	-0.14
Criticizes management	-0.20	**2.02*****	**1.39***	**2.22*****	**1.58****	-0.64
Considers leaving job	-0.17	0.43+	0.12	**0.60****	0.29	-0.31
Solidarity	0.00	0.16	0.33	0.16	0.33	0.17
Generates ideas	0.00	0.16	0.33	0.16	0.33	0.17
Feels undervalued	0.15	**1.00****	**1.16*****	**0.85****	**1.20****	0.17
No inclusion of voice	0.00	0.16	0.25	0.16	0.25	0.09
Criticizes organization	1.17	**4.15*****	**6.68*****	**2.99****	**5.52*****	**2.53***
Low morale	-0.01	0.12	**0.46****	0.12	**0.46****	0.34+

Coworkers are lazy	-0.08	**1.61***	**2.07****	**1.69***	**2.15*****	0.46
Lack of teamwork	0.08	0.24	0.42	0.16	0.34	0.18
Worry	0.00	0.16	0.12	0.16	0.12	-0.04

Note: Bold indicates significantly higher number of mentions between the conditions; negative indicates second condition is lower than the first; *** p <.001,

** p <.01, * p <.05, + p < .10.

Strength-frame/Self-focus Condition (SS)

Participants in the strength/self condition expressed more positive emotions to describe their experiences than in any of the other conditions, as illustrated by these comments:

> I felt happy. I felt a sense of self-satisfaction, and that's a good feeling. I think that was also one of the reasons I was able to get the job done so well. It was an exciting feeling. I feel like I've certainly been blessed.

In this condition, employees were more likely to mention having the ability to speak and be heard. This sense of having their voice included and self-efficacy was observed by their freedom to make decisions and direct themselves with assuredness, such as: "I do my work without little or no supervision. I do that well." In addition, while focusing on areas of personal satisfaction, they moved to discuss matters that pertain to others. They reflected on their relationships, valued helping others, and expressed empathy. This suggests that the strength inquiry frame expands the reference point from the individual to the collective, despite a targeted focus on the self. Moreover, positive experiences are not always rooted in pleasant memories. For example, the following quote from the SS condition exemplifies how an employee recalled a prior negative situation that was turned around and become a positive one:

> When I first came to the medical center and started walking around and talking to people see how they felt about the EEO program or how they felt about working here…it was 1995. People said that the only thing missing that would make this a plantation is a white man on a horse in the halls. But two years later the medical center won Undersecretary of Health's EEO Award for Diversity.

On average, the SS condition had the highest number of observations of positive emotions including joy, excitement, and appreciation. Other themes that were higher in this condition than in any other were inclusion of voice, freedom to make decisions, conscientiousness, and empathy toward patients.

Strength-frame/Organizational-focus Condition (SO)

Significant themes within the SO condition included organizational learning and compliments to the organization. The SO condition also had the highest number of mentions, on average, of employees expressing regard for others. Here, we saw the situations discussed that had employees viewing their coworkers as cohesive and engaged team players. Compliments toward the organization showed how employees "identify with each other as opposed to another organization." They discussed the "common thread" within their organization that made it special or unique from other organizations. A feeling of appreciation was expressed, especially when employee efforts were valued such as: "They (management) say 'thank you' and 'good job' and 'way to go.' And I've gotten financial awards; …so they really do, I feel like, if you put forth the effort and do your job, then people do appreciate that. And that means a lot." Favorable comments about coworkers included viewing them as competent and hard working.

A focus on organizational strengths helped employees consider when their organization was effective, such as:

> At least (management) try to help a little bit, you know, instead of just picking their nose and walking on by like, oh well…sometimes they really do. I mean sometimes basically in the engineering department if all the shops work together, hell would probably freeze over, but sometimes they really do. Like I had to rebuild the whole pharmacy upstairs and I was in charge, and all the shops came in, and they actually listened to me. And I couldn't believe it. I mean here I am, and they're going to listen to me.

In the OS condition, employees expressed a sense of cooperative unification with others, which often went hand in hand with feeling valued. People shared scenarios with language to describe their coworkers as collaborative, supportive, professional, hard-working, fun, enjoyable, and helpful in creating a nurturing and congenial atmosphere:

> It's a lot of, it's a lot of caring and love over there, you know, as far as the nurses taking care of them, the guys. You know, having camaraderie with even the housekeepers…it's

> like a family over there; We laugh, and we smile at each other. We joke around; This organization has some very good people here.

Employees also viewed coworkers as effective team players: “The team…we all worked together well.”

Overall, there was a sense of family and cohesiveness that emerged for those who engaged in this condition, as expressed by this employee: “We worked together as a family…we worked together because it was a common cause.”

Deficit-frame/Self-focus Condition (DS)

The key themes in the deficit/self or DS condition included a pronounced abundance of negative emotions. Frustration, anger, and resentment were expressed in statements such as: “I got so angry, first he was undermining me…so I got rebellious, you know. And I kind of took it out on everybody else; I began to feel frustrated and fearful.” Frustration was a sentiment found to be significantly higher in the DS condition and dominated many of these conversation.

Employees expressed the sense that they were controlled by others. Employees in this condition criticized their organization, its communications, and management. They shared thoughts about leaving their job and worked to create solidarity toward negative concerns with their interview partner. Participants also described themselves as being controlled, trapped, or watched, which reflected vulnerability and a sense of insecurity. They discussed feeling dominated, and placed the locus of control outside themselves (even though the focus was on the self, not the organization). Their expressions of not being included in decision-making processes nor having their voices heard were underscored in statements that reflected isolation, such as: “There was a clique of employees that very much left me with kind of a left-out, isolated feeling; They would get all these big bucks, so I felt, you know, like I was being abused.”

In general, participants in this condition felt that they were treated unfairly, left out,

undervalued, or not valued at all. Some sought support for their articulated plight and blamed an external "other," those deemed to be the cause of the problems they identified.

Deficit-frame/Organizational-focus Condition (DO)

Those in deficit/organization condition (DO) frequently described their organizational contributions as being undervalued. They expressed a sense of being disrespected by management: "The supervisor is making big bucks and doing nothing but walking around with clipboards, harassing people, degrading people, yelling and screaming at people." Employees articulated the need to have others show more respect and communicate more effectively: "I think the morale in the overall hospital would be a lot better if, like you talked about, the respect, if folks would respect one another."

As might be expected, employees engaged in the DO condition were much more critical of the organization's structure and complained of low morale. Some focused more on generalities, not targeting specific issues but describing how the entire system was in decline, as illustrated in this quote: "A lot of low points about this place, man. It's going to the pits, to the dogs." Combined, this frame and focus also tends to draw out people's negative regard for others. Many shared criticisms of their coworkers, with laziness being the core issue, as portrayed in multiple conversations: "They sit back…and don't care to look out for nobody, you know; The young ones don't want to do nothing…they lazy as hell; Some of them do as little as possible."

A key theme in the DO condition, mentioned more frequently than in any other, was criticism of the organization. For those who identified problems more concretely, this was also coupled with idea generation. After describing several scenarios depicting problems leading to low morale, one participant begins to describe ways to boost morale, including improvements to

the cafeteria offerings:

> And I think, you know, if you want to make employees happy, then you have to give them something when they're not on the clock but still physically in the building. And so, you know, sprucing up the types of things that they offer and making sure everything is really fresh and offering, I guess, freshness and something that's fairly healthy and wholesome because a lot, you know we're supposed to be, you know, more health conscious.

Unlike those in the DS condition, when employees identified specific issues, they ultimately began to try and resolve them.

DISCUSSION

To broaden the scope of these findings for managerial application we develop a set of propositions suggesting a relationship between inquiry strategy and readiness for change. We then show how each inquiry strategy is associated with a unique clustering of themes, revealing four distinct states of readiness for change, which we call readiness modes.

Inquiry focus

Inquiry focus on the self or organization can impact employees' readiness for change. When the focus is on the self, employees' personal concerns toward achievement and well-being are perceived to be affirmed by existing assets (SS) or thwarted by underscoring one's deficiencies (DS). In both the strength- or deficit-based conversations, we learned that the attributional influence of self-referencing magnifies whatever emotions are cultivated by the inquiry frame. Therefore, in preparation for change, such bursts of positive energy may be useful in countering negativity already present in the system. But when attributions toward the self escalate how employees' personal goals have not been realized, this can breed anger and frustration. This appears to serve as a call to redirect attributions toward management and other

coworkers. In contrast, focusing on the deficits of the organization (DO) elicits some negative emotions, but unlike the DS combination, more time is spent identifying issues and criticisms than expressing feelings about them. Therefore, we propose the following:

> ***Proposition 1a:*** *When the inquiry focus is on the self, emotions generated by the inquiry frame will be more frequent than when the inquiry focus is on the organization.*

When individuals focus on the organization, employees tend to see themselves in terms of their organizational identity, with positive (SO) or negative (DO) experiences as elicited by the frame in use. But unlike the attribution error that appears to be prompted by the deficit frame, when employees experience positive emotions, they tend to project these favorable feelings toward external reference points rather than internally. When engaged in strength frame this positive attribution occurs in both the self and organizational foci.

For example, the joy that is expressed in SS inquiry strategy is typically associated with recollections of actions related to helping others, such as a time when they supported a fellow worker or patient to get through a difficult situation. It would seem that, while emotions are expressed on a personal level, positive feelings are often linked with employees' describing situations where empathy and support toward others were exercised. Conversely, with the DS inquiry strategy we see negative emotions felt, but in response to the sense of having one's goals blocked, thwarted, or violated by others. Hence, the feelings here are directed outward, in search of blame rather than positive attribution.

This affects readiness for change by the heightening of both positive and negative emotions when the focus is on the self (as stated in Proposition 1a), and then subsequently those sentiments are attributed to sources outside the self. This expectation is stated as:

> ***Proposition 1b:*** *Regardless of the inquiry focus, emotions generated by the inquiry frame will be directed toward external sources.*

Inquiry frame and focus

As readers would expect, employees targeting strengths (SS or SO) express more positive experiences and those targeting deficits (DS or DO) more negative ones. But to highlight the nuances of how inquiry strategy influences readiness for change, we turn to an examination of how frame and focus work together to prepare employees in varying ways. Given that the focus on the self escalates more emotions, we see an abundance of joy (SS) or frustration and anger (DS), depending upon the frame. When targeting organizational strengths, employees are less likely to become emotional, rather they seem to use their feelings to explain the positive or negative aspects of their organization. Because there is some distance between them and the problem, they do not take it as personally, but move toward different response actions. To explain this more fully we examine the frame and focus together to show how this prepares employees for change in varying ways.

Those engaged in describing the deficits as it relates to their personal concerns (DS) work to deflect the source of the problem to external causes, often blame the organization, management, or their coworkers as the reason for the identified problems (e.g., poor communication, ineffective management). Feeling controlled by the organization and its management generates movement; specifically, employees try to distance themselves from the perceived problem source, which sometimes results in discussing plans to leave or quit their jobs. To offset the frequency of negative emotions experienced, employees appear to bond with their partners as they converse, seeking fellowship to commiserate or to be consoled. The tension prompted by the DS strategy becomes vividly apparent. When employees examine problems that target their personal identity, they work quickly to establish an affiliation with others while they

search to find sources for blame outside themselves. This seems to arouse perceptions that those with power exploit workers, which motivates participants to come together to support one another in a defensive stance. Thus, when the deficit frame is coupled with a focus on self (DS), employees also pull away from their organizational identity, moving to promote solidarity with other coworkers against those with power. Employees work swiftly to create an alternative organizational identity, one that creates cohesion with other coworkers.

In contrast, we see no indication of this in the DO strategy. When deficits are targeted with a focus on the organization (DO), employees still experience negativity, but are not encumbered by feelings of frustration and anger. Instead they are concerned about the situation and once they vet their issues and voice complaints, many begin to try and resolve them. While a great number of people feel undervalued and, like those in the DS strategy, seek to attribute external causality, even in this initial stage of the intervention we found that there is an attempt to problem solve, generating ideas for resolution.

Taking this information together, we argue that the emotions generated by the frame, coupled with a focus, can influence employees' perceptions of themselves and their organization, which in turn, impacts their readiness for change. We state this expectation as:

> ***Proposition 2a:*** *When the deficit inquiry frame is combined with a focus on the self, employees will experience negative emotions and prepare for solidarity.*
>
> ***Proposition 2b:*** *When the deficit inquiry frame is combined with a focus on the organization, employees will criticize and prepare for resolution.*

The surge of positive emotions experienced by those using the SS strategy is linked with several themes. With joy comes a clear presence of valuing and being valued. Moreover, conscientiousness toward one's role is combined with the importance of helping and feeling empathy toward others. With the self focus on strengths we see that positive experiences are

linked with positive emotions, which are the result of working hard to be in the service of others. This does not suggest that employees are unrealistically positive. We found that both criticism of management and the organization are still present when using this strategy. But clearly the strength of positive emotions that are exercised in the SS strategy helps prepare employees for desired engagement.

Those recalling strengths related to their organization (SO) also experienced joy, but quickly move to describe favorable attitudes toward their organization. Again, empathy for others is relevant to this strategy, but what is most interesting is the theme of organizational learning. Obviously employees recall positive experiences, but surprisingly, a key theme centered on opportunities for learning, growth, and development. It is also important to note that they remain quite realistic, identifying organizational problems with explicit criticisms toward how they have been treated. But unlike the deficit approaches, employees do not target management as the problem center. Therefore, this strategy (SO) prepares people for further development and, in turn, may help prepare employees for revising current views of their organization and their role in it. In other words, they are prepared to see their situation in a new light as they prepare to build upon and potentially alter their present conceptions of the organization.

Again, we see how the emotions generated by the frame, coupled with a focus, influence employees' perceptions of themselves and their organization, which in turn impacts their readiness for change, stated as:

> ***Proposition 3a:*** *When the strength inquiry frame is combined with a focus on the self, employees will experience positive emotions and prepare to engage.*
>
> ***Proposition 3b:*** *When the strength inquiry frame is combined with a focus on the organization, employees will be interested in learning and prepare to build change.*

Readiness Modes

We see that the interaction between frame and focus reveals four distinctive states of readiness. We label these readiness modes, defined as: the predominant pattern of emotions and attitudes experienced by individuals based upon the inquiry strategy used in an organizational change intervention. Therefore we propose:

> ***Proposition 4:*** *The emotions generated by the inquiry frame interact with the salient identity activated by the inquiry focus, creating a distinct readiness mode.*

The inquiry strategy elicits a different combination of attitudes and emotions that are not directly predictable from the influence of frame or focus independently. Each strategy corresponds to one of four distinct readiness modes. We name these modes as Valuing and Engagement (SS), Frustration and Solidarity (DS), Broaden and Build (SO), and Criticize and Resolve (DO). Figure I depicts these proposed relationships in a two by two pictorial showing the themes that are significantly higher in each mode.

Figure 1. Inquiry Strategy and Associated Readiness Modes with Major Themes

		Inquiry Frame	
		Strength	**Deficit**
Inquiry Focus	**Self**	**Valuing & Engagement** Excitement Joy Appreciation/gratitude Values helping Feels valued Inclusion of voice* Freedom to make decisions* Conscientiousness* Empathy for others	**Frustration & Solidarity** Frustration* Anger Resentment Controlled by others Criticizes organizational communications Criticizes management Considers leaving job Solidarity
	Organization	**Broaden & Build** Organizational learning* Compliments organization* Effective organizational communication Coworkers cohesive Coworkers as a team Coworkers are competent Coworkers work hard Effective teamwork	**Criticize & Resolve** Generates ideas Feels undervalued No inclusion of voice Criticizes organization* Low morale Coworkers are lazy Lack of teamwork Worry

Note: *Denotes mentions of the theme are significantly higher in this condition than any other condition based on Scheffe analyses (see Table III).

Valuing and Engagement Mode: This readiness mode is associated with the strength-based/self-focused (SS) inquiry strategy, which elicits positive emotions such as joy, excitement, and appreciation. In this mode, employees exhibit a positive sense of self and articulate favorable sentiments toward others. Although the focus is on self, employees explain their positive accounts as a result of hard work and caring for others. Employees mention helping behaviors, display workplace conscientiousness, and express empathy toward patients and coworkers. They demonstrate confidence and self-efficacy, as expressed by perceptions of having the freedom to make decisions and to be heard by management. Strategies that facilitate the conditions for empowerment provide known benefits, yet the conditions for empowerment are seldom achieved

(Yukl and Becker, 2006). Understanding that this inquiry strategy can produce a positive reflection of self, one that expands to positive thoughts and actions toward others, is a valuable contribution to the change management literature and to those working to achieve an empowered workforce.

Frustration and Solidarity Mode*:* This readiness mode is associated with deficit-based/self-focused (DS) inquiry strategy. In this mode, employees express negative emotions such as frustration, anger, and resentment. Focusing on personal reactions to problematic situations, employees work to relieve themselves of the responsibility for these problems through various means, including blaming others and their proposed departure from the organization. Employees work to generate solidarity because the negative tension appears to foster a need to bond with others. Feeling exploited, employees try to establish security in what was frequently described as a "threatening workplace environment". This mode ushers in the harsh reality of negativity, immediacy, and urgency to establish support. Thus, we label it Frustration and Solidarity.

Broaden and Build Mode: Associated with the strength-based/organization-focused (SO) inquiry strategy, this readiness mode promotes organizational effectiveness. Here, employees are stimulated to seek out opportunities for learning. This mode appears to support employees to perceive and to express the benefits of working with others coupled with positive emotions. Fredrickson (1998) proposes that positive emotions contribute to broader and more flexible thinking and help build resources for resilience and endurance. In this study, employees discuss collective efforts such as organizational learning in the context of conversing with a coworker. Additionally, they recall both their organization and coworkers in a positive light, frequently describing actions associated with collaboration and relationship-building, and strongly

emphasize a team effort. While discrete ideas are not generated, people commence to show a willingness to be open-minded. The strength frame's emphasis on assets combined with an external organizational focus prime what Fredrickson describes in her broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (1998). Thus, we label this readiness mode Broaden and Build.

Criticize and Resolve Mode: This readiness mode exemplifies the deficit-based/organization-focused (DO) inquiry strategy, which primes negative thoughts toward the organization. This mode favorably influences participants' efforts to restore balance to their organization through immediate problem-solving. Here, employees express negative emotions and articulate a sense of being undervalued and excluded. Unlike the SO strategy, which helps participants focus on their organizational identity through favorable perceptions of the collective (e.g., effective teamwork), this mode moves employees to distance themselves from the cause of the problems—their organization or other employees. In this study, the cause of problems was often perceived to be described as "management".

In this readiness mode, employees express negative sentiments about the workplace and their coworkers, but they also generate ideas. Moreover, their reflection and dialogue regarding the organization's problems spark concern and worry. Possibly wanting to alleviate this distress or imbalance, but not feeling directly threatened (as those in the Frustration and Solidarity Mode do), employees expeditiously move to problem-solve. Again, we see how targeting issues within the system appears to heighten a sense of urgency to resolve the identified dysfunction. As employees direct their thoughts toward the specific problems, they naturally seek out a timely resolution to address the concern. In other words, this mode encourages an awareness of what is wrong and evokes the need to establish restoration to the matter at hand. Thus, we label this mode Criticize and Resolve.

The results convey a rich picture of how inquiry strategy prompts different emotions, attitudes, and aspects of the employees' identities. As a result, we see how inquiry strategy helps to create and foster distinct readiness modes. Managers can use this information to select a strategy at the start of their change process that best suits the organizational context and type of change desired.

Implications

The choice of inquiry strategy at the start of an intervention creates different emotional states that can influence attitude formation, which, in turn, shapes how people view others and their organization. We learned that different inquiry strategies can elicit identity salience in varying ways, which manifest in alternative emotional states as employees prepare for organizational change. Inquiry frame and focus interact to promote four distinct change readiness modes, which will help managers understand how the questions they ask at the start of an intervention can support or deter a path toward different types of change. When employees think about deficits or strengths, with a focus on themselves or their organizations, they are moved toward valuing or frustration, and prepare to criticize or build from the onset.

We believe this information will help managers make more informed choices about how to facilitate the commencement of their change process. Perhaps most importantly, the findings suggest that managers can deliberately choose an inquiry strategy based upon the type of change they want to initiate. For example, if immediate change to existing processes is desired, managers may find the Criticize and Resolve Mode useful. This mode leads to immediate action because employees want to reduce tensions and solve identified problems. Here, concerns surface, but because attention is not directed to the employees personally, they are critical but move to address the issues. While some time is spent fault-finding, employees do so without

extreme escalation of blame. The use of the deficit-based/organization focus (DO) inquiry strategy may elicit quick solutions and help people to address problems within the existing system, particularly if managers help guide employees to target specific issues, rather than discussing problems as generalities. Therefore, this strategy may be a particularly effective starting point for first-order change initiatives.

We learned that managers would do well to avoid or certainly apply with the utmost care inquiry strategies that use a deficit/self (DS) combination. This generates personal survival reactions as employees feel threatened. Here, negative emotions and seeking to establish blame are prominent features within the Frustration and Solidarity Mode. Employees primed by this inquiry strategy express a great deal of negative emotion, then move to align in solidarity against the organization, setting themselves apart from management, which is often the perceived to be the external problem source. While prior research has suggested that creating a sense of urgency and fostering emotions such as anxiety and fear can spur actions toward change (Kotter, 1998), we found that rather than prompting movement toward change, this strategy elicits a defensive posturing. We consider the DS strategy most likely to escalate defensive tactics and/or avoidance, as it targets personal deficiencies. Therefore, it is not recommended as a starting point to enable mobilization at the start of a change process.

Both the Valuing and Engagement and Broaden and Build Modes (resulting from the strength-based frame) may be useful for initiating transformational change. The former helps people to value their work and others, while the latter seems to create an open space for development, which could be an effective starting point for reframing. More specifically, these readiness modes are better suited to help employees begin to modify how they see themselves, each other, and their organization (i.e., revise perceptions of how they view their work, job,

others, and the organization). This frame cultivates positive emotions and promotes gratitude and the valuing of self and others. As such, it provides a safe place to let go of prior conventions and move to adapt to the process of change, as employees begin to reconstruct their thinking and create new views for the future.

In addition, the positive emotions that are elicited in the Valuing and Engagement Mode, such as appreciation and joy, may also help loosen the hold of prior negative emotions (toward problems with the organization, management, or the process itself). Because positive emotions can quite literally "undo" the undesirable effects of negative emotions (Fredrickson *et al.*, 2000), contributing to resiliency and coping, this strategy may be useful if employees come to the intervention with strong negative feelings or biases. If the environment is intensely negative prior to the process, experiencing a surge of positive emotions may help empower employees to value engagement rather than allowing pre-existing anxieties to fester.

Interventions driven by poor performance and the negative emotions associated with them can facilitate urgency (Jehn, 1997), potentially useful for first-order change. However, when collective efforts are necessary for deep change, as opposed to short-term improvements, cultivating positive emotions may help to establish transformational cooperation (Sekerka and Fredrickson, in press). Therefore, the strength/self inquiry strategy that brings forward the positive aspects of employees' personal experiences, generating good feelings, self-efficacy, and valuing can be used. If this strategy is followed by a focus on the organization (SO), which encourages capacity building, employees will be primed to work together to achieve a common goal.

If transformation is desired, we suggest that managers or practitioners begin their intervention with an inquiry strategy that focuses on personal strengths to generate positive

emotions and confidence, and later switch to a focus on the organization to broaden the scope and impact of the process. This is not to suggest that problems, dysfunction, and symptoms that represent a threat to the organization are to be ignored. Indeed, issues that threaten the livelihood of the organization must be addressed to ensure its survival. We recommend that first order change processes can be used to conduct maintenance on the existing system, applying the deficit frame with an organizational focus. However, if deep change is desired, petitioning strengths may more effectively enable mobilization, helping employees to let go of a past that is no longer effective and prepare them for transition to something new.

Practitioners will do well by embracing the benefits that can ensue from using a variety of approach combinations. We encourage managers to work thoughtfully to craft an appropriate inquiry strategy, rather than choosing just one process that reflects an inclination, preference, tradition, or fad.

Limitations

Because this research was conducted in one organization, further studies are needed to investigate how different inquiry strategies work in a variety of contexts. Future research must examine how the planned use of strategies and modes can be used as a means to instill and measure readiness for change. If selected in advance, they must be studied empirically in relation to different types of organizational change, testing the propositions presented. While combining qualitative and quantitative measures provide greater depth, replication and cross-sectional comparative studies will add value to this research.

Perhaps most importantly, we must learn how different inquiry strategies work throughout the process of change. This study offered insights about the start of the effort, but it is not yet clear how strategies work together or independently to achieve organizational change,

given a particular context over time. We expect that many practitioners weave different processes together intuitively; however, managers will benefit from research that explicates the influence of frame and focus throughout the entire process. Additionally, replication and cross-sectional comparative studies will add rigor to our analyses. This is particularly important because we imposed an individualistic notion of "self", which may not be an appropriate assumption in collectivist cultures.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the underlying dynamics of alternative inquiry frame (strength or deficit) and focus (self or organization), used at the start of an organizational change intervention. We showed how conversations fostered through four different inquiry strategies influenced employees' emotions, attitudes, and salient identities. We used the findings from this study to create testable propositions to guide future change management research. Our analyses demonstrated how inquiry strategy contributes to four distinct readiness modes; Valuing and Engagement (SS), Frustration and Solidarity (DS), Broaden and Build (SO), and Criticize and Resolve (DO). This study advances readiness for change theory by providing evidence that specific inquiry strategies at the start of an intervention elicit differing emotions and attitudes, resulting in distinct readiness modes that may be used to facilitate different types of change.

APPENDIX A

Experimental Manipulations

Strength/Self: We are interested in discovering when you have been at your best. Reflect back, from the moment you first joined this organization until right now. Obviously, you have experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points, and low points. For now, think about a moment that stands out as a high point for you. This was a time when you felt the most engaged, you were the most successful, you felt alive or energized and you were the most effective – you were at your best. While you may have experienced a couple of high points, please share a story of just one. What happened? What was it about this situation that made it a high point for you?

Strength/Organization: We are interested in discovering when this organization has been at its best. Reflect back, from the moment of first joining the organization, until right now. Obviously, the organization has experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points, and some low points. For now, think about a moment that stands out as a high point for the organization. This was a time when the organization was the most engaged, the most successful, alive, or energized, and the organization was the most effective – the organization was at its best. While the organization may have experienced a couple of high points, please share the story of just one. What happened? What was it about this situation that made it a high point for this organization?

Deficit/Self: We are interested in understanding the major problems you have encountered at your job and to identify some of the causes of those problems. Reflect back, from the moment you first joined this organization until right now. Obviously, you have experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points, and low points. For now, think about a situation that stands out as one where you have felt the most blocked and you were the most frustrated –

you were the least effective. This was a time when you faced problems on your job, things got in your way that kept you from being at your best. While you may have experienced a couple of problematic situations, please share an example of just one. What happened? What was it about this situation that raised the most concern for you?

Deficit/Organization: We are interested in understanding the major problems within this organization, and to identify some of the causes of those problems. Reflect back, from the moment of first joining the organization, until right now. Obviously, the organization has experienced ups and downs, twists and turns, high points, and some low points. For now, think about a situation that stands out as one where the organization was the most blocked, the most obstructed – the organization was the least effective. This was a time when the organization faced problems, things got in the way that kept the organization from being at its best. While the organization may have experienced a couple of problematic situations, please share an example of just one. What happened? What was it about this situation that raised the most concern for this organization?

APPENDIX B

Sample: Of the 224 participants, 182 were African American, 24 were Caucasian, and 18 were from other racial groups. The sample was 55.4% female and 44.6% male, with ages ranging from 25 to 70 years (mean = 46.6 years). Their positions ranged from janitorial to highly skilled medical personnel and organization tenure ranged from 1 to 44 years (mean=11.5 years), with years in their current positions ranging from 1 to 35 (mean=7.0 years). Participants' educational levels ranged from 8th grade completion to advanced graduate degrees (M.D., Ph.D., etc.); many had some college or technical training after high school (45%).

Methods: A qualitative process was used to analyze the transcribed conversations (n=110; two dropped because of poor recordings). A random subsample was drawn for theme development (3 per condition). Informed grounded theory with procedures for constant comparison method (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) guided the process. A preliminary codebook was created with themes and descriptors (cf. Boyatzis, 1998; McCall & Bobko, 1990). The codebook was tested on four randomly selected transcripts from the subsample (1 per condition) by the first and third authors. After dropping, adding, and combining several themes, both authors independently tested the codebook on the entire subsample (n=12) using an intensity-frequency scoring method based percentage of agreement on presence. Inter-rater (IRR) agreement rate of 87.9% (n=12) validated the use of the codebook. The coders then independently coded all of the remaining transcripts (n=98), similar to conventional content analysis (Kassarjian, 1977). A manual effort was deemed apropos, rather than use of computing software tools, because of the frequency of jargon, slang, sarcasm, double negatives, and the use of acronyms. The IRR on the entire sample was 94.99%. Consistent with other qualitative studies, inferential statistics were used to build theory, not to determine causality (cf. Cowan and O'Brian, 1990; Druskat and Wheeler, 2003; Kahn, 1990).

REFERENCES

Argyris, C. & Schon, D.A. (1978). *Organizational learning: A theory of action perspective*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Armenakis, A.A. & Harris, S. (2002). Crafting a change message to create transformational readiness. *Journal of Organizational Change Management*, 15(2): 169-84.

Armenakis, A.A., Feild, H.S. & Holley, W.H. (1976). Guidelines for overcoming empirically identified evaluation problems of organizational development change agents. *Human Relations*, 129(12): 1147-61.

Armenakis, A.A., Harris, S.G. & Feild, H.S. (1999). Making change permanent: A model for institutionalizing change. In R.W. Woodman and W.A. Pasmore (Eds.), *Research in Organizational Change and Development*, 12 (97-128). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Armenakis, A.A., Harris, S.G. & Mossholder, K.W. (1993). Creating readiness for organizational change. *Human Relations*, 46(6): 681-704.

Avey, J.B., Wensign, T.S. & Luthans, F. (2008). Can positive employees help positive organizational change? Impact of psychological capital and emotions on relevant attitudes and behaviors. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 44(1): 48-70

Bagozzi, R.P., Gopinath, M. & Nyer, P.U. (1999). The role of emotions in marketing. *Academy of Marketing Science Journal*, 27(2): 184-207.

Balogun, J. & Hope-Hailey, V. (2003). *Exploring Strategic Change*. Prentice Hall: London.

Barrett, F.J. & Peterson, R. (2000). Appreciative learning cultures: Developing competencies for global organizing. *Organization Development Journal*, 18(2): 10-22.

Bargh, J.A. (1982). Attention and automaticity in the processing of self-relevant information. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 43(3): 425-36.

Bartunek, J.M., Rousseau, D.M., Rudolph, J.W. & DePalma, J.A. (2006). On the receiving end: Sensemaking, emotion, and assessments of an organizational change initiated by others. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 42(2): 182-206

Bernerth, J. (2004). Expanding our understanding of the change message. *Human Resource Development Review*, 3(1): 36-53.

Boyatzis, R.E. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Bryant, M. & Wolfram Cox, J. (2006). The expression of suppression: Loss and emotional labour in narratives of organisational change. *Journal of Management and Organization*, 12(2): 116-129.

Bunker, B.B. & Alban, B.T. (1987). *Large group interventions: Engaging the whole system for rapid change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Bushe, G.R. (2007). Generativity and the transformational potential of appreciative inquiry. In D. Zandee, D.L. Cooperrider, and M. Avital (Eds.), Organizational generativity: Advances in appreciative inquiry (Vol. 3). Amsterdam: Elsevier.

Bushe, G.R. & Kassam, A.F. (2005). When is Appreciative Inquiry transformational? A meta-case analysis. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 41(2): 161-82.

Chawla, A. & Kelloway, E.K. (2004). Predicting openness and commitment to change. *Leadership and Organization Development Journal*, 25(5-6): 485-98.

Clarke, C., Hope-Hailey, V. & Kelliher, C. (2007). Being real or really being someone else? Change, managers and emotion work. *European Management Journal*, 23(2): 92-103.

Cooley, C.H. (1902). *Human nature and the social order*. NY: Scribner.

Cooperrider, D. & Sekerka, L.E. (2003). Elevation of inquiry into the appreciable world: Toward a theory of positive organizational change. In K. Cameron, J. Dutton, and R.

Quinn (Eds.), *Positive organizational scholarship* (225–240). San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler.

Cooperrider, D.L., Whitney, D. & Stavros, J.M. (2003). *Appreciative Inquiry handbook: The first in a series of AI workbooks for leaders of change*. Bedford Heights, OH: Lakeshore Publishers.

Cowan, G. & O'Brian, M. (1990). Gender and survival versus death in slasher films: A content analysis. *Sex Roles*, 23(3-4): 187-96.

Cross, S.E. & Markus, H.R. (1994). Self-schemas, possible selves, and competent performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 86(3): 423-38.

Cunningham, C., Woodward, C., Shannon, H., MacIntosh, J., Lendrum, B., Rosenbloom, D. & Brown, J. (2002). Readiness for organizational change: A longitudinal study of workplace, psychological and behavioural correlates. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 75(4): 377-392.

Dasborough, M.T. (2006). Cognitive asymmetry in employee emotional reactions to leadership behaviors. *Leadership Quarterly*, 17:163-178.

Druskat, V.U. & Wheeler, J.V. (2003). Managing from the boundary: The effective leadership of self-managing work teams. *Academy of Management Journal*, 46(4): 435-57.

Dutton, J.E., Dukerich, J.M. & Harquail, C.V. (1994). Organizational images and member identification. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 39(2): 239-64.

Elfenbein, H.A. (2008). Chapter 7: Emotion in organizations: A review and theoretical integration. *Academy of Management Annals*, 1(1): 315-386.

Fox, D., Ellison, R. & Keith, K. (1988). Human resource management: An index and its

relationship to readiness for change. *Public Personnel Management*, 17(3): 297-302.

Fredrickson, B.L. (1998). What good are positive emotions? *Review of General Psychology*, 2(3): 300-19.

Fredrickson, B.L. & Losada, M.F. (2005). Positive affect and the complex dynamics of human flourishing. *American Psychologist*, 60(7): 678-686.

Fredrickson, B.L., Mancuso, R.A., Branigan, C. & Tugade, M.M. (2000). The undoing effect of positive emotions. *Motivation & Emotion*, 24(4): 237-258.

French, W.L., Bell, C.H, Jr. & Zawacki, R.A. (2000). *Organizational development and transformation: Managing effective change*. Boston, MA: Irwin McGraw-Hill.

Fugate, M., Kinicki, A.J. & Prussia, G. E. (2008). Employee coping with organizational change: An examination of alternative theoretical perspectives and models. *Personnel Psychology*, 61(1):1-36.

George, J.M. & Jones, G.R. (2001). Towards a process model of individual change in organizations. *Human Relations*, 54: 419-444.

Gergen, K. J. (1997). *Realities and relationships: Soundings in social construction*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. NY: Aldine, Hawthorne.

Golembiewski, R.T. (1998). Appreciating appreciative inquiry: Diagnosis and perspectives on how to do better. In R. Woodman and W.B. Pasmore (Eds.), *Research in organizational change and development*, Vol. 11 (1-46). Greenwich, CT: JAI press.

Harley, B., Hardy, C., Alvesson, M. (2004). Reflecting on reflexivity. *Academy of Management Best Conference Paper*.

Higgins, T. (1996). Knowledge activation: Accessibility, applicability, and salience.

In T. Higgins and Arie W. Kruglanski (Eds.), *Social psychology: Handbook of basic principles*, (133-168). New York, NY, US: Guilford Press.

Holt, D.T., Armenakis, A.A., Harris, S.G. & Field, H.S. (2007). Toward a comprehensive definition of readiness for change: A review of research and instrumentation. In W. A. Pasmore and R. W. Woodman (Eds.), *Research in organizational change and development*. Oxford, UK: Elsevier.

Huy, Q.N. (1999). Emotional capability, emotional intelligence, and radical change. *Academy of Management Review*, 24(2): 325-46.

Jehn, K. (1997). A qualitative analysis of conflict types and dimensions in organizational groups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42(3): 530-57.

Jones, R.A., Jimmieson, N.L. & Griffiths, A. (2005). The impact of organizational culture and reshaping capabilities on change implementation success: The mediating role of readiness for change. *Journal of Management Studies*, 42(2): 361-86.

Kahn, W.A. (1990). Psychological conditions of personal engagement and disengagement at work. *Academy of Management Journal*, 33(4): 692-724.

Kassarjian, H.H. (1977). Content analysis in consumer research. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 4(1): 8-18.

Keyes, C.L.M. (2002). The mental health continuum: From languishing to flourishing in life. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 43: 207-222.

Kotter, J.P. (1998). Leading change: Why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, March-April: 59-67.

Lazarus, R.S. (1991). Cognition and motivation in emotion. *American Psychologist*, 46: 352-367.

Lee, H. (2004). The role of competence-based trust and organizational identification in

continuous improvement. *Journal of Managerial Psychology,* 19(6): 623-39.

Lewin, K. (1951). *Field theory in social science.* New York: Harper & Row.

Lippitt, R. (1961). Dimensions of the consultant's job. In W.G. Bennis, K.D. Benne, and R. Chin (Eds.), *The planning of change*, 1st ed. NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Losada, M. (1999). The complex dynamics of high performance teams. *Mathematical and Computer Modeling*, 30(9-10), 179-192.

Ludema, J.D., Whitney, D., Mohr, B.J. & Griffin, T.J. (2004). *The Appreciative Inquiry summit: A practitioner's guide for leading large-group change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Kohler.

Madsen, S.R. (2003). Wellness in the workplace: Preparing employees for change. *Organization Development Journal*, 21(1): 46-54.

Markus, H. (1977). Self-schemata and processing information about the self. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 35(2): 63-78.

Markus, H.R., Crane, M., Bernstein, S. & Siladi, M. (1982). Self-schemas and gender. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 42(1): 38-50.

Markus, H. & Kunda, Z. (1986). Stability and malleability of the self-concept. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51(4): 858-66.

Mayer, M. & Smith, A. (2007). The practice of change: Understanding the role of middle managers, emotions and tools. *European Management Journal*, 25(2): 79-80.

McCall, M. & Bobko, P. (1990). Research methods in the service of discovery. In M. Dunnette and L. Hough (Eds.), *Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology*, 1, (381-418). Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Mead, G.H. (1934). *Mind, self and society from the standpoint of a social behaviorist*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

Miner, A.G., Glomb, T.M. & Hulin, C. (2005). Experience sampling mood and its correlates at work. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(2): 171-193.

Mohr, B., Smith, E. & Watkins, J. (2000). Appreciative Inquiry and learning assessment: An embedded evaluation process in a transnational pharmaceutical company. *OD Practitioner*, 32(1): 36-52.

Mossholder, K.W., Setton, R.P., Armenakis, A.A. & Harris, S.G. (2000). Emotion during organizational transformations. *Group & Organizational Management*, 25(3), 220-243.

Nasby, W. (1985). Private self-consciousness, articulation of the self-schema, and recognition memory of trait adjectives. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(3): 704-709.

Oatley, K. (1992). *Best laid schemes: The psychology of emotions*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Pond, S.B. III, Armenakis, A.A. & Green, S.B. (1984). The importance of employee expectations in organizational diagnosis. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, 20(2): 167-81.

Porras, J.I. & Silvers, R.C. (1991). Organizational development and transformation. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 42: 51-78.

Prochaska, J.O., Redding, C.A. & Evers, K. (1997). The transtheoretical model of change. In K. Glanz, F.M. Lewis and B. K. Rimer (Eds.), *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research, and practice* (60-84). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Prochaska, J.O., Velicer, W.F., Rossi, J.S., Goldstein, M.G., Marcus, B.H., Rakowski, W., Fiore, C., Harlow, L.L., Redding, C.A., Rosenbloom, D. & Rossi, S.R. (1994). Stages of change and decisional balance for 12 problem behaviors. *Health Psychology*, 13, 39-46.

Quinn, R.E. (2000). *Change the world: How ordinary people can achieve extraordinary results*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Reason, P. & Bradbury, H. (2001). *Handbook of action research: Participative inquiry and practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Roberto, M.A. & Levesque, L.C. (2005). The art of making change initiatives stick. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 46(4): 53-60.

Sekerka, L.E. & Fredrickson, B.L. (in press). Establishing positive emotional climates to advance organizational transformation. In N.M. Ashkanasy and Cooper, C.L. (Eds.), *Research companion to emotion in organizations*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Sekerka, L.E., Brumbaugh, A., Rosa, J. & Cooperrider, D. (2006). Comparing Appreciative Inquiry to a diagnostic technique in organizational change: The moderating effects of gender. *International Journal of Organization Theory and Behavior*, 9(4): 449-489.

Senge, P.M. (1990). *The fifth discipline: The art and practice of the learning organization*. NY: Doubleday.

Strack, F., Schwarz, N. & Gschneidinger, E. (1985). Happiness and reminiscing: The role of time perspective, affect, and mode of thinking. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49(6): 1460-1469.

Tajfel, H. & Turner, J.C. (1985). The social identity theory of intergroup behavior. In S. Wochel and W.G. Austin (Eds.), *Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations*, 2nd ed. (7-24). Chicago, IL: Nelson-Hall.

Wanberg, C.R. & Banas, J.T. (2000). Predictors and outcomes of openness to changes in a reorganizing workplace. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 85(1): 132-42.

Weisbord, M. (1987). *Productive workplaces: Organization and managing for dignity, meaning, and community.* San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Weiss, H. & Cropanzano, R. (1996). Affective events theory: A theoretical discussion of the structure, causes, and consequences of affective experiences at work. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 18: 1-74.

Winnicott, D.W. (1965). *The maturational processes and the facilitating environment: Studies in the theory of emotional development*. NY: International Universities Press.

Yukl, G. A. & Becker, W. (2006). Effective empowerment in organizations. *Organizational Management Journal*, 3(3):210-231.